

Fire Cadet Candidate Prep Guide (Oral Exam)

This guide has been created to help you prepare for the City of Milwaukee Fire Cadet oral exam. Additional materials and assistance in preparing for the oral exam can be obtained by attending the Fire Cadet Oral Examination Practice Sessions, as detailed below.

The Oral Exam Format

The oral exam consists of a series of questions that target the skills and abilities necessary to perform as a Fire Cadet in the Milwaukee Fire Department. **The questions will not assess knowledge of firefighting.** All candidates will answer the same questions in the same order.

You will be given a specific arrival time for your interview. You must arrive on time for your interview. We suggest that you arrive at the site at least 15-20 minutes early. **On the day of your oral exam, you will first check in and then be directed to a waiting area.** When it is time for your oral exam, you will go to an exam room.

The oral exam will be conducted by up to three panelists and a moderator. The moderator will seat you and provide an introductory statement. You will then be asked a series of job-related questions. You will have a copy of the questions in front of you. You will be given up to 15 minutes to complete the exam.

After you have completed all interview questions, you will check out at the main desk where you first checked in. You will then be given a Personal History Questionnaire to take home with you to complete. This document must be received by our office or postmarked by **Friday, March 28, 2014**. You should then leave the exam site.

The Panelists

Your performance during the exam will be evaluated by the panelists, all of whom understand the essential duties and critical skills and abilities of Firefighters/Fire Cadets. The panelists have been trained to evaluate your responses to the questions.

Areas of Measurement

The oral exam is designed to assess the job-related skills and abilities most relevant to the position of Fire Cadet. Areas that may be assessed in the oral exam include the following: team orientation, situational judgment, diversity, motivation/initiative, integrity and working under pressure. Your responses will not require knowledge of department procedures or specific firefighting knowledge.

Suggestions for Responding to the Oral Exam

- Be sure to listen carefully to the question and provide an answer for that specific question. If you do not understand the question, you may ask to have it read again.
- Some questions will require that you describe specific situations you may have experienced. If the question asks about a situation you have not experienced, you should answer based on how you would react in that situation.
- Be sure to answer the entire question. Be aware your time is limited to 1-2 minutes per response.
- Think of the acronym “STAR” when formulating your answers to questions:
 - S – Describe the **situation** in which you were involved.
 - T – Describe the **task** to be performed.

- A – What was your **approach** to the problem?
- R – What were the **results** of your actions?

Exam-Day Instructions and Tips

- Arrive 15-20 minutes early for the oral exam. Allow yourself plenty of time to get to the site, and to park. **If you are late you may not be allowed to take the test.**
- If the parking lot behind the Safety Academy is full overflow parking is available across the street and next door.
- Bring a valid photo identification card, e.g., driver's license, school ID.
- As with all interviews, it is recommended that you dress appropriately. While you are not being rated on your appearance, professional attire is encouraged.
- Be sure to throw away any gum/candy/mints before the interview.

Preparing for the Oral Exam

- Practice answering behavioral questions (e.g. how would you react/have you reacted in a specific scenario). If a question has more than one part, make sure you answer all parts. For example: Please describe how you have worked on a team in the past. What did you learn from this experience?
- Video record or practice responding to questions in front of a mirror. Try to identify and avoid any distracting habits such as fidgeting, saying "um" too often, etc.
- Practice interviewing with friends or family.
- Review the duties and abilities from the Fire Cadet Job Announcement bulletin at www.city.milwaukee.gov/jobs/FireCadet.
- The more prepared you feel, the easier it will be to control test anxiety. Check the FPC website at www.city.milwaukee.gov/jobs/FireCadet for practice sessions, preparation guides and videos.
- Attend a **Free Practice Session**
 - What: 60- minute oral exam practice session
 - When: Monday, 2/17/14 (4:30 – 8:30 p.m.)
Wednesday, 2/19/14 (4:30 – 8:30 p.m.)
Saturday, 2/22/14 (9 a.m. – 4 p.m.)

Please register for a one-hour practice session using the links below. The code for registration, "cadet2014" (no caps), is required to sign up for a session.

Monday Practice session

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mondays-fire-cadet-practice-oral-interview-registration-10514291529?ref=elink>

Wednesday Practice session

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wednesdays-fire-cadet-practice-oral-interview-registration-10519154073?ref=elink>

Saturday Practice session

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/saturdays-mfd-fire-cadet-practice-oral-interview-tickets-10461104445?ref=elink>

Test Confidentiality

There are a number of candidates competing for a limited number of positions. If another candidate or person asks you about the oral exam, or any of the questions asked in the oral exam, do not provide an answer. Anyone who obtains an unfair advantage or helps another to gain an unfair advantage may be disqualified. In addition, this is a violation of Fire and Police Commission Rules.